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764 that of a woman her glass bangles are broken and her metallic jewellery removed. The breaking of the glass bangles is a symbol of the dissolution of her marriage. From many enquiries it appears that neither food, coins or iron is put into the mouth of the deceased.

Up to this point it seems that the bodies of men and women are 766 treated alike, except that persons of corresponding sex make them 843 ready. Only in rare cases a trace was found which indicated that there is the belief that the soul of the pregnant woman might become [776] an evil spirit called a *churel*; preparations for burial of such women seemed to be uniformly the same as when the woman is not with child. Only once in scores of burials was there any indication that the pregnant woman was cut open after her death and the fœtus removed and buried with her. This, if ever done among the Kols, is now a rare thing with them.

Digging the Grave. In the meantime the grave is being made 764 ready. The spot where it is to be dug must first be "purchased." This is done by one of the relatives who, when the place has been decided on, strikes the ground five times with his *phaora* or mattock. Two pice are then laid down on the ground and the digging proceeds. It is proper for the chief male mourner to break the first earth at the spot agreed upon. He may take out five or seven clods and thereafter relatives or friends lend a hand and complete the task. The grave is dug in a north-south line, and is about six feet long, three feet wide and four feet deep. "Chest deep" is the rule. No special implements are used in digging nor are the ones used considered unclean afterwards. When the grave has been dug there are still things which must be done before the body can be laid in it. One of the relatives sprinkles a little salt on the bottom of the grave. Usually, though, a cloth is [263] laid in first, using the one which was thrown over the body after death, or the blanket on which he died, and the salt is sprinkled over this. The body is now lowered into the grave. One or two men enter the grave, the body is passed down to them and they place it in its proper position.

In the case of a woman she is buried flat on her back, face upwards, having her arms stretched by her side with the palms up. [823] Male corpses are laid face downwards with the hands folded behind over the buttocks, palms upwards. In both cases the head is to the north.[1] After the body is properly placed it is covered with another

[1] The direction in which the body is placed in the grave varies considerably among primitive tribes. The Murhas have the head to the south; the Birhors likewise. The Hill Bhuiyas are laid on the left side with the head to the south and face to the west. The Munda tribes, Kharias, Hos and Santals bury their dead with the head north. Bodding states that the Santals burn with the head south. (*Census of India*, 1931; 1: 3, p. 102). Elwin finds that the Baigas bury with the head south. (*The Baigas*, p. 200).

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the body or the grave. After that he should not look back but go straight on towards the village.

Before the mourners depart there are certain other things that should be done. The two pice previously mentioned should be laid at the northern end of the grave. These the Basor or some other low caste Hindu present will remove shortly afterwards. Some salt and some mustard seeds are also scattered over the grave. Salt is generally regarded as a protective and devil-scarer, while the mustard protects from evil spirits who are kept so busy picking up the tiny seeds that they have no time to think of evil. Sometimes a little milk and some millet seed are also scattered over the grave. Milk is an offering to Mother Earth.

It is not unusual to keep a fire burning over the place where the head is resting, though this is not the general custom. Such a fire should burn at least two days. This is managed by starting a fire and placing upon it two logs which keep on burning slowly for the next few days. Ordinarily the Kol puts no definite marker on the grave. The stones laid on top help to keep him from digging a new grave where an old was dug; yet it has been reported that in digging a new grave they have often come upon bones. Such a place is covered up and a new start made.

CREMATION. It was noted previously that the question whether a body should be burned or buried is, according to Kols, largely an economic one. Under modern conditions, especially near cities, where wood is scarce and expensive a cremation costs at least Rs. 5 and can hardly be afforded. Even then cremation is considered the most satisfactory method as it gives a greater freedom to the spirit. As long as the skeleton remains undecomposed in the grave, the spirit, if reborn into this world, will have to take some form like his previous one. If, however, the body is burnt and the bones largely consumed, the spirit is free to be reborn into anything else. There are other considerations in the mind of the Kol: children and unmarried young folk should always be buried, as should people dying from diseases such as leprosy, plague and smallpox. One dying of smallpox should on no condition be burned.

If the method of cremation is decided upon, the making ready of the body for this type of disposal is essentially the same as described above in the preparation for burial. Upon arrival at the *ghat*, the funeral pyre, rather than the grave, is prepared. In most cases the wood is purchased, although it is the custom for friends and relatives to bring bits of wood. Cow dung cakes may also be added. Ordinarily

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After the Basor begins the others may start and all set out to enjoy themselves. Liquor is sometimes freely consumed on such occasions. 765 177

Another feast, a family one called *barkhi* (H. *Barsi*), is given after a year, and after this the chief mourner can eat as he likes; it also marks his entry into the society once again. During the year of mourning it is sometimes his custom to eat normal foods at home, but never to go to a feast elsewhere. 769 765

MISCELLANEOUS DEATH CUSTOMS. After the return from the graveyard there is no formal visiting of the spot unless it be for the purpose of putting food upon the grave. After three or four days someone from the household may pay the graveyard an informal visit to see if everything is all right and that the grave has not been disturbed by animals. No flowers are put on the grave at any time, and the bones are never dug up and buried again at some other place. Kols also say that they never throw bodies into the streams, although we were informed by one of them that it is sometimes done. At Satna in Rewa State it was related that some times a male corpse may be taken to a river, where the head is shaven by the Hindu *nai* whom they pay two to four annas. As the body is about to be cast into the river the mourners announce that they are ready to give the river a gift, naming a certain sum of money, which they will pay to the Brahmin presiding over that part of the river. The usual amount is Rs. 1-4. This is called *gaunda*—alms. As the body floats away they shout "Go and get salvation" and also the words, "we've been so long together, but from now on we are separated, you from us and we from you, and we shall now have nothing more to do with each other." After this they return to the house and bathe and prepare things as previously related. 765 766 184 177

There are adjustments necessary within the family after the death of the father or the mother. If the wife has died, all her clothes must be given away to the Domar or Basor. A second wife should never wear the clothes of a deceased woman. However, she may wear the metallic jewellery and ornaments of the first wife, and they are usually given to her. 768

If the father should die his clothes should also be given away. The widow has to break her glass bangles and this is usually done at the place and the time of the funeral. They may be broken by a member of the family, or a Hindu *nai* may be called. The widow is not required to put away her metallic ornaments.

There is no trace of *sati* or widow burning among the Kols. We found none who had ever heard of a Kolin doing it. One man said: "We 764 762 522

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764
762 cannot get such faithful wives—they prefer to run away," and there
522 was a hearty laugh.

766 In some parts of India the bodies of young children are sometimes buried under the floor of the house in which they lived but this custom does not prevail among the Kols. Children are buried in the regular *masan*, and not in a special place by themselves. If both mother and child die at the time of childbirth they are buried together in one grave. If they die on different days so that they cannot be buried together they are given separate burials.

Those dying abnormal deaths, by suicide, accident, or childbirth, are not treated differently from those dying in other ways. Kols are unlike most Hindus in this respect.

764 Sometimes grass plays a part in the funeral ceremonies, and in
765 Rewa State we found that Kols used *urai* grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides*)
824 at such a time. It was stated that at the time of bathing after the return
184 from the funeral ground a bunch of *urai* grass should be held in the right hand and that it too should be bathed. At least the chief mourner should do this. During the following days and until the time of the funeral feast this same bunch of grass should be carefully washed every day. On the day of the funeral feast it is thrown into the tank or river.

764 An interesting explanation of the use of small plugs if gold put into
823 holes bored in the front teeth came from the Rewa State. It was said
301 that when one died and the body was cremated the teeth would not be
184 consumed by the fire and the gold would still be in them Or even if the gold had melted out it would be in the ashes, and would be gathered with them and taken to the river. The throwing of gold into a
[782 river, particularly the Ganges, is a gift to the gods and pleases them
775] and the spirit gets *aram*—rest—in the after life in *baikuntha*—the abode of *Vishnu*.

764 Tattoo marks are said to have a certain significance at the time
304 of death. This applies to women as the men are not tattooed. If a
789 woman has tattoo marks on her forearm, and also on her upper arm, the arms are so folded when she is placed in the grave that the two tattooed places touch each other. This is said to somehow afford protection, please the gods and help the spirit on its way.[1] See also pages 29 and 30.

764 The chief mourner should also keep a piece of iron about his person
823 during the days of mourning, and possibly ever after. Sometimes, just before burial, this piece which is to act as a charm, is touched to the

1 See Crooke, *Op. Cit.*, p. 298.

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the peaceful one, for she is the goddess of smallpox. The burning fever and high mortality are a terror to the village people. Any kind of kid is said to be acceptable to her, and a red flag usually marks her presence. This *devi* is mostly worshipped by Kol females, although both boys and girls go before her with vegetable and food offerings for five successive days. If men should be required to make the offering, on account of some home condition which prevents the women from going to the shrine, they must not be accompanied by any female relative, but must go alone. During an attack of the disease, the Kols suppose that the *devi* is actually dwelling in the person ill, and great care must be taken to keep her in a good humour. On no account should a Kol who dies of smallpox be cremated, as it is likely that the *devi* is still residing in him, and to burn his corpse would antagonize her.

This concludes the catalogue of the chief female deities worshipped by the Kols. In the future more information may be made available about the others not yet discussed at any length.

MALE DEITIES WORSHIPPED BY KOLS

Baghdeo. Baghdeo is the tiger god and is generally revered all through the jungle country of Central India. Certain of the tribes of this area have septs named after the tiger and it may be that there is a definite totemistic relationship. Russell and Hiralal[1] note that some of these primitive tribes such as Bhatia, Binjhwar, Kawar, Kharia, Kol, Korkus, Mowar, Rautia and Savara have septs relating to the tiger which may have totemistic implications. The Rautias, for example, are said to throw away their earthen pots on hearing of the death of a tiger. Other groups abstain from killing the tiger. In some cases the connection between taboos and totemism is very slight as Grigson has noted among the Hill Marias.[2] He also records[3] that the tiger was supplanted by the buffalo as the totem of one group "since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry." Now they retaliate by joining the tiger beats! Among Gonds in general it appears that Bagh worship has become all but universal, and that this worship persists irrespective of clan, phratry or tribe. Since it is apparent that the worship of the tiger is largely confined to jungle areas, much of the worship is probably protective rather than totemistic. If there ever was a totemistic stage it is now long past and all but forgotten.

1 *Op. Cit.*
2 *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 230.
3 Page 241.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

putrid behind. She often dwells in a palm tree. Certain Munda tribes, like the Bhuiyas, sometimes extract the fetus from a woman dying in pregnancy, and the two are buried on the opposite sides of a stream, as it is the theory that no spirit can cross water.[1] If the two should join they become witches. Kols do not practice this as far as we were able to learn, and no operation of this nature is performed. The woman is buried with the child still in her womb.

The Danawa is said by the Kols to be one of the most powerful of all spirits. He is likely related to the Vedic *Danava* who was connected with Vritra, one of the atmospheric demons. He lives in tall trees, and, if he can get the opportunity, attacks one at night, catching his victim round the throat and almost choking the unfortunate person to death. He is particularly met with in the Kaimur jungles.

The Jind, or more popularly *Jin*, according to the Kols, is the spirit of a Mohammedan, although it is usually considered one of the many kinds of spirits known to Mohammedans. Kols have a very bad opinion of *Jinds*, yet say that they know little about them, as they do not pay much attention to Kols but are out to injure Mohammedans.

The Kabbis is a lover of human blood. This demon has long teeth and sharp nails and attacks one ferociously. The nails are used to make deep cuts which let the blood flow and it is sucked or licked up by them. If the victim should struggle and give trouble, the demon will plunge his long teeth into the body and thus hold him while he drains out the man's life blood.

Matia is the demon of the whirlwind. It may destroy crops, bring up great storms and carry away roofs and thatch houses. During the warm season whirlwinds are common and one can trace their course by a cloud of dust reaching far up into the sky. Vultures soar about, looking for those whom *Matia* may destroy.

The Pret is the spirit of the deformed, the cripple, or the mentally defective. Males become *prets* and females are *pretins*. While Kols commonly mention them they usually do not believe them to be very dangerous, nor can they cause much trouble. Rather they should be pitied and fed, so sometimes food and water are placed out for them if they are suspected of being in the vicinity.

The Rakshasa is a terrible injurer and the very name of this demon is an euphemism, 'the preserver.' Most Kols have a great fear of a *rakshasa* and the report is that this kind is more commonly seen than any other and that they also suck blood if they can get a chance. They are usually about at night time and are very dangerous to women who are with child, and try to gain access to the house by

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 196.